1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

lime is made from coral, branched coral being preferred.



preparation is the work of the women, and consists of burning the coral with a minimum of slaking. The work is carried on in the recesses of the bush, the place being kept secret and no men permitted to approach it. Large quantities are prepared at a time, at infrequent intervals.

Areca-nut and betel-pepper must be provided in abundance on every ceremonial occasion, and are always given to visitors from other villages to take home with them on their return. Each individual carries his own supply of lime, or begs a dip from his neighbour; it is not provided with the other ingredients. When in his own village the chewer of the betel-mixture will freely fling the skins about on the ground, to be swept up by the women in the course of their cleaning. They are thrown away in any convenient spot, in the case of villages on the cliff top generally over the cliff, or they may be burnt. There does not appear to be any special place for disposing of them, as is described by Ivens (1927, p. 287) for the SE. Solomons. But when on a visit to another village, particularly to one in the mountains, where there is always a feeling that the people are not to be trusted, the skins are carefully put into the little basket which everybody carries, and brought away, lest an enemy should use them for making 'bad medicine'.

Branches of areca-nuts are carried by the messengers sent out by the *tnmaun* to summon people to a ceremony. (Cf. Ivens, 1927, p. 288.)

The natives say that chewing the betel-mixture 'makes them feel strong'. I can testify that when they have plenty to chew they are livelier and more inclined to talk. It is known to them that people who chew too much of it are apt to fall into a slightly dazed and stupid condition, and there are a very few who do not like the effect it has upon them and therefore avoid it. The majority, however, obviously feel lost without it, like an inveterate smoker left without tobacco.

## STORIES OF THE ORIGIN OF VARIOUS FOODSTUFFS

Among my collection of stories there is a large number explaining how the people came to be possessed of, or to learn to use, certain of their foodstuffs. Many of these turn on the activities of the famous 'two brothers', and are connected with a widespread series extending over a large part of the Pacific (see references in my paper on Folk-tales, 1932, p. 74). As the stories are in most cases

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi



437 438 [251] [422] failing him, brother, son, or other male relative, to provide fish for exchange. Sometimes a man would apologize for not selling me some fish for which I had asked him, on the ground that his wife would not have enough for the *toan* next day. A supply is sometimes prepared in advance by half-smoking the fish so that they will keep for a short time. Each woman's load is her personal property, and the goods for which she exchanges it are also her property, for the use of her own household. There is no pooling. If they are short of fish they will sometimes supplement it with sticks of tobacco.

437 [571] [609] I accompanied my friends from Petats on several trips to the mainland of Buka for this purpose. When the two parties met, packs were undone and a rapid inspection of fish and counting out of taro took place. The people of each party kept together; they went round holding out the goods they had to offer, and the buyers saw to it that the fish were of the appropriate size for the number of taro offered in exchange. I saw one woman try hard to obtain two small fish for four taro, but eventually she had to be content with one. Sometimes they would get very excited and snatch the fish and taro from each other, or two women would grab the same article, almost tearing it in pieces. Two of the Buka women brought loads of dried opossum, and these also were exchanged for fish. The whole affair was got over as quickly as possible; there was very little gossip, and it was clearly regarded as a business, not a social occasion. Both sides began their homeward journey as soon as the exchange was finished, not stopping to chat or to chew betel, though we usually sat down to do so as soon as we were well out of sight. Even now, there is a certain amount of distrust between the people of the coast and the people of the hills, though relations are outwardly friendly.

437 438 [211] The fish-taro exchange is a permanent feature in the life of all the villages in this area. In the case of exchanges between distant villages, appointments are made from one meeting to the next by exchanging bits of string in each of which a knot has been tied for each day which is to elapse before the next excursion. Some specified individual is in charge of the string, and cuts off one knot each day till the time arrives. On the occasions on which I accompanied the party, we seldom waited for more than a short time before the other people arrived. Once, when they were rather longer in coming, some of the women wanted to go farther along

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi



lime-pot, making the lime powerful. Lime from this pot was then used in massaging the patient.

The question now arises, are the *urar* thus addressed being cajoled into conferring a favour, or commanded to perform a task which they cannot refuse? This has been suggested as a criterion separating religion from magic (Rivers, 1914, vol. ii, p. 405). It is true that most of the formulae are couched in the imperative. But the reverent tone in which they were spoken, in cases where I actually saw the ritual performed (less evident where it is merely related), leaves me in no doubt that it is a plea, not a command, which is intended. This is supported by the fact that the address to the *urar* is sometimes preceded by an offering of food burnt in the fire for them, or some bit of ritual involving lime. It is also consonant with the general attitude of awe, largely mingled with terror, which characterizes the relations between human beings and the *urar* throughout. (See Chapter XIV.)

In some cases formulae are used in which the *urar* do not figure. These may take the form of a direct command: 'Come, bonito, come plenty, come to my village', 'Garfish, garfish, come and take hold of my line'. Or the command may be given to the apparatus to do its work: 'Catch them, catch them', said to the bonito hook, or 'Fetch the man here', to the medicine used in war magic. Again, the formula may be a simple asseveration that what is required will, or has, come to pass: 'You and I spit on the taro, now it is large', 'All the women are waiting with their baskets, to-morrow the place will be full of *tsuwaluŋ*'.

In all cases where formulae are used, they are kept secret. In some, notably those used in bonito magic, it was stated that the words must be passed on only to a son or a sister's son, in others they might be told to any one, provided payment were made. I have instances in my collection of such knowledge having been obtained from father, mother, mother's brother, and grandparents, as well as from strangers. Love magic is often referred to the people of the mountains; this is interesting, as the relations between the mountain people and the coastal people are not normally friendly.

This brings us to the consideration of the place of these formulae in the native scheme of magico-religious procedure. It will have been noticed that in many cases no mention is made of any words being spoken. It may be that in some of these, the secret part of the procedure was either intentionally or inadvertently